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THE NEW RUSSIA

BY GERALD MORGAN

THE eyes of the American public have lately been riveted, almost for the first time since the beginning of the war, on Russia. For at last, out of the multiplication of Russian rumors, one undeniable fact has come—the fact of a Revolution. The Czar has abdicated—though that is unimportant, since it is the religious and executive office which counts, not the man. But what is really important is that the Russian Reactionaries are at last being cast out, some by physical violence, from the seats which they have for centuries so securely held.

The average American of intelligence has since the outbreak of the war learned to discuss European aims and policies with a good deal of general knowledge. The meaning of England's supremacy at sea, France's fortitude of arm and spirit, Germany's will to conquer and Austria's unexpected solidarity have made Europe something more for us than a colored map. We have learned where and how each nation hoped to expand at another nation's expense, particularly on the Adriatic, in the Balkans and in Asia Minor. We have learned to understand the sophisticated suspicion with which such small nations as Holland, Switzerland and Sweden regard their larger neighbors, and if we do not yet look at Europe through their long-disillusioned eyes it is only because we have an ideal which does credit to our heart.

It is, however, a fact that the comprehensive sympathy which America offered, not only to Western but also to Central Europe, did not extend to Russia. Elsewhere we tried to see through their Governments to the national aims of the people themselves. In Western and Central Europe we assume a conflict of national ambitions, not, as the smaller neutrals do, a mere struggle for commercial suprem-

acy among nationalist cliques. Given the facts, ours is the better focus.

Unfortunately America's judgment against Russia was based not upon fact but fable. It was based upon an idea that the Russian people were practically slaves. They are not slaves, and they know what they mean to achieve in this war as well as any other people. The Russians are not fighting merely because the Czar wants to get Constantinople; they are fighting to make Russia their own country, and to dispossess from the court and from the civil service such a set of titled and untitled knaves and intriguers as has not thrived elsewhere since the days of Versailles.

No doubt the recent Russian Revolution, which seems to have cleared the decks of reaction, will have its effect on American public opinion. No doubt the upstart Protopopov, unrestrained by the figurehead premier Golitzine, overplayed his hand, and delivered Old Russia into the hands of her enemies. Reaction is at least temporarily beaten, but it must not be forgotten that the real power lies in the hands of the Army and Navy. Russian officers are nationalists, anti-Germans, and for the moment, liberals; but it is not likely that the alliance between the military and the intellectuals of Russia will last forever.

American popular conceptions of the Russian Empire were drawn from two main sources: the Jews, and the British statesmen of the nineteenth century. The result was a composite picture of external aggrandizement and internal tyranny which bore little resemblance to the truth, and which failed to include that New Russia which had grown to manhood since the war. This New Russia sees in the Houses of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern a breakwater between the Russian reactionaries and Western democracy. That is why New Russia has made this war her war, and why Old Russia fears victory as much as she fears defeat. New Russia is friendly to Anglo-Saxon liberalism, friendly to the Jews; but neither understands her. The aim of New Russia in this war is Russia for the Russian people.

In shaping Russian policies from the conclusion of the Turkish War of 1877 to the annexation of Bosnia in 1908, the great nationalist forces were quiescent. Reaction ruled; Germany, until Bismarck's death or even a little longer, was friendly; the "intellectuals" and anarchists were held in check by systems of espionage; Central Asia and the Far

East were peacefully penetrated. The Jews were persecuted; and England was left in a state of constant fear for the safety of India. As a result of these policies an American opinion was formed from British and Jewish testimony which wholly ignored the Russian people, and which held true of Government circles alone. This misconception unfortunately still perseveres today.

The real awakening of the New Russia came with the Japanese War. The policy of the court party was at that time an Eastern policy, conversely peaceful toward the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns. Port Arthur and Vladivostok had been fortified. Special interests crossed the Yalu into Korea, clashed with the Japanese over certain timber and mineral concessions, and at once demanded imperial support. The giving of that support led to a disastrous and highly unpopular war, in the course of which Austria and Germany noted Russia's weakness, and treated her thereafter, in Balkan matters, as her military record appeared to deserve.

The consequent unpopularity of the court party obliged them to make concessions at home. Beaten by their Japanese enemies, browbeaten by their Teutonic friends, they recognized the existence of a Russian nationalist party because they had to. They allowed its representatives to help reorganize the army and navy, and to assert themselves unofficially but generally. Their power was shaken; their hand was forced; where violence was no longer safe, they resorted to subterfuge—a sure sign of weakness. It was at this time that the growth of the New Russia might have been observed in the West, but in America particularly the obsessing idea continued to prevail that the New Russia must be born by a sudden bloody revolution; and such slow progress as was known to obtain elsewhere in the world could not be imagined in Russia. It is true that the all-important Ministry of the Interior was usually represented by a reactionary or else controlled by reactionary influences; but nevertheless reform after reform has since 1908 been conceded by the Czar. But the main result of the hostile Teutonic policy since Mukden, and, even more, of the present hostilities, has been the nationalization of the Russian army and navy. Russia's army is Russia in arms, Russia intent on the destruction of the Hohenzollern-Hapsburg breakwater, behind which, in the stagnant waters of the Petrograd bureaucracy, the reactionaries have been trembling with apprehension. They feared the

fall of Teutonic conceptions of autocratic government which must inevitably have been followed by the fall of their own conceptions; they feared equally the triumph of German arms, which would have been succeeded by a revolution of New Russia, already armed, not longer to be withstood, bound to be victorious. Like many another Government, they were in the position of a man who has started a fire which he could not check. At the beginning of the war, in the exasperation of the moment, the Czar said he would sacrifice his last mujik in the cause of victory; but today it is the mujik himself who is going to do the sacrificing. The tables are turned.

The Old Russia is passing, and has been passing for some time. The Russia of Kipling—the Russia of the 'eighties, of *The Man Who Was*, of the Bear that Walks Like a Man—the Russia which threatened the Khyber Pass, is gone. That was the Russia of the Grand Dukes, the Russia which was defeated by Japan because she was unsupported by the Russian people. The Bear that Walks Like a Man is today a stuffed and hollow sham.

Gone also is the Old Russia of the anarchist and intellectuals, of George Kennan's Siberia, of those wonderful spies, the "agents provocateurs," who committed crimes themselves in order to detect criminals, and who could scarcely be distinguished from their quarry.

All this is past or passing. The Russian Cossacks riding down the crowds, slaughtering Jews, are today as fabulous as the Russian wolves. It is true, conspirators are still treated with a harshness unknown in the West. It is true that equality of opportunity is still denied to the Jews. It is true that the special reactionary interests tried to the last to hold the Russian people in subjection. It was against those interests, as represented not only in Petrograd but also in Berlin and Vienna, that the New Russia was fighting.

This war is everywhere a war of peoples. It is not a war of dynasties or of ambitious interests any longer, but a war of nationalist aspirations, a war of public irredentism. It is as peoples that the nations are fighting for free outlets, not as Governments, and Russia is no different from the rest. Territorial changes in the map of Europe are likely to seem minute, when peace is made, compared with the loss of life involved; but the main changes in the world are not changes of frontier. To what extent

this war is tending toward state socialism is mere conjecture; but the forces behind that tendency are quite as ardent in Russia as elsewhere. It is time that misconceptions regarding Russia should cease, not only in America, but in England as well. It is time that such phrases as "the mixed Mongolian Tartar upstarts that may seize the Russian throne and use the Russian people" should fall flat as they deserve.

Of course Old Russia held on till the end. Golitzine, the Russian Premier, and Protopopov, the Minister of the Interior, were reactionaries. But the Ministers of War and the Navy were hand in glove with the Duma; and for this reason the conservatives had to fly false colors. Palace intrigues succeeded forcible acts of repression; that was all. These intrigues were largely directed against the municipal unions of Russian manufacturers on which the supplies for the army and navy depend; and were not always unsuccessful. The existence of a strong industrial middle class allied with the military against court influences was the result of these intrigues. In Russia this conflict is called the "interior" front, and is quite as important as the combats of the actual or "exterior" front. These acts of the reactionaries were of course the acts of traitors; but they prove how small had become reaction's stake in the New Russia that they feared her victory within at least as much as their own defeat without.

It did appear that, win or lose, the Russian reactionaries were done for. Yet this was not quite true. In spite of the fact that victory and defeat held equal terrors, they had one chance left. It was not the separate peace; that they dared not make, for they knew New Russia would avenge herself on them if they did. Their only chance was this: for France and England to desert them.

Suppose this had happened. Suppose England, or the English democracy, fed for years and years on lies about Russia, opposed to the Czar at Constantinople by force of habit, had decided to make peace with the Eastern party which controls Germany to-day. This was the peace which Germany was trying to get, and for which she would certainly have made great concessions, even so far as to recognize not only England's rights in Egypt, but also England's spheres of influence in lower Mesopotamia and Southern Persia. Suppose England had made terms for Russia with-

out Russia's permission, as, for instance, Northern Persia in exchange for Poland, with a return everywhere else to the *status quo ante*. Suppose England had then deserted Russia. What would have happened?

We Americans and the almost equally uninformed British would have said it was a good way out of a bad mess. The Russian reactionaries would have pretended to be shocked, and would have told the Russian people that the English had broken their word of honor, an explanation which could hardly have failed of acceptance, since it could not have been denied. The betrayed Russian nationalist forces—the New Russia—would thus have been turned against England and France.

A somewhat chastened Germany and a disillusioned Russia would at once have gravitated together. The autocratic Governments of the world—Germany, Austria, Russia and Japan—undeterred by contrary nationalistic influences, would have found little trouble in establishing some sort of alliance. And liberalism in all those countries would have received a setback.

There never was great danger that the Russian reactionaries would make a separate peace with Germany, although they wanted to, because they simply did not dare. There was, on the contrary, grave danger that England, France, Italy and Belgium would make what would virtually have been a separate peace with Germany. America would have been glad to see Russia pay the bill, but America would have been wrong. For the New Russia which America did not understand would then—rebuffed and deserted by the West—have cast herself into the arms of Germany, and of that other great autocracy, Japan.

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Up to the time of Falkenhayn's defeat at Verdun, and his consequent retirement from the office of chief of staff in the summer of 1916, it was the aim of Germany's diplomatic and military policy to achieve a decision in the West coupled with a separate peace in the East. This policy was traditional in Prussia; Bismarck would have favored it; but unfortunately for Germany the Russia of 1916 was not the Russia with which the Iron Chancellor was familiar. Petrograd was as fertile a field for intrigue as it had ever been, but in the Russian people—the New Russia—Germany found

an intractable foe against whom neither Prussian nor pro-German Russian influences could make the slightest headway. It took many months for Prussian military politicians to realize the actual state of affairs in Russia, because the Petrograd reactionaries with whom they were in constant intrigue kept promising what they could no longer perform. With Hindenburg's accession to the military dictatorship, however, both the strength of France and the weakness of the Russian reactionaries were definitely recognized. An opposite policy was adopted; in the East intrigue was supplemented by force, in the West force was turned to intrigue. It was then suggested to the peoples of England, France, Belgium and Italy that Russia pay the bill.

There is only one way in which New Russia can effectively combat Germany's overtures to British pacifists, and that is by military successes. Russia is to the British people, as she is to the American people, still Russia; there is no understanding of New Russia in any English-speaking country yet. It is on that fact, and on the prospect, if necessary, of further successes over the Russian Army, that Germany is counting. New Russia will fight forever, but there is no telling how long the Western Powers will fight. Success must not be too long delayed, or the British Government may be forced by the British people to desert Russia. That is still the hope of the ousted Russian reactionaries, and the present danger of the Russian people. What, then, are the military prospects on the Eastern front?

Since the outbreak of the war the Russian army has always had a tactical value superior to the Austrians and Turks, but inferior to the Germans. The value of a modern army group depends much less than formerly upon grand strategy, and much more upon minor tactics and the co-operation of auxiliary arms both at and behind the front. Excellence in minor tactics depends upon discipline, morale, and upon team work much more diversified than was ever previously expected of infantry. A modern battalion of infantry is a real little army in itself, and when in action each private soldier has a specific duty to perform. In discipline and morale the Russian soldier knows no superior, but he is not the technical equal of the German.

It is, however, in the problems of co-ordinated effort that the Russian army falls so far behind the German army. In the first place the co-operation of the auxiliary arms of

artillery, communications and military supplies is much better organized by the German higher command. In the second place the industrial and railway organization of the German Empire, outside the zones of active operations, is vastly superior to the improvised structure erected by the municipal unions of New Russia. These unions have had a hard time. Determined, but ignorant of their problems, they have suffered as well from the petty annoyances and restrictions of the Russian reactionaries in the Ministry of the Interior. Russia is still a long way from being self-supporting in a military sense; her armies still depend on the transport of munitions from Vladivostok and Archangel. Materially and technically she has always been, and still is today, far behind Germany.

New Russia's one great asset is her unweakened morale. Time after time the Germans have defeated the Russians in great battles only to find that they rallied and struck back almost at once. Hindenburg's victory at Tannenberg was followed by a most unexpected reverse at Augustowo. The German success at Lodz was followed by a reverse in front of Warsaw. Hindenburg's second East Prussian victory was neutralized at Ossowiec. The great campaign of 1915 was more successful; but Hindenburg was checked at Riga, and Mackensen at Rovno. In 1916 the Russians struck back, retaking Lutzk and Czernowitz, and proving again that their capacity for offensive resistance was not broken. This unshaken rallying power on the part of the Russian army has not been lost on Germany; they do not wish to pit their own superiority in technique and organization against it in too long a war. It is idle to conjecture how long the Germans can go on defeating Russian armies. For Germany there is always the danger that in the end Russia's numbers and perseverance will prove exhausting, that weight will be too much for skill.

Now Germany wants peace today at Russia's expense. If peace cannot be achieved through American interventionist sympathies working in conjunction with British pacifism and French war-weariness, it must be forced upon the Western Allies by a positive collapse of Russian military opposition; and this can be accomplished only by victories on the field of battle more crushing than those of Mackensen in 1915.

Germany desires no such exhausting and unproductive

alternative as another serious campaign against Russia would be. If beaten the Russian armies would retire, fighting, as they have done before. There is no vital spot in Russia until Moscow is reached, nearly five hundred miles away. Russian military conceptions include the weapon of retreat, their own peculiar weapon; at the very height of Brussiloff's victorious campaign of 1916, the Russian War Department issued a semi-official statement to the effect that retreats were quite as good as advances, in that they were equally exhausting to the enemy. It is by exhaustion that Russia seeks her ends. Her armies are patient, steadfast, tireless, hard to trap. To fight the Russians, a German general on the East Front once said, is to attack an enormous sandbank with a child's toy spade. The sheer weight of the sand, he said, keeps piling in. In German military circles there is little desire to extend mere territorial conquest, if no decision can be reached, and little hope that any such decision can be achieved over the Russian field forces. If further advances into Russia are made by the German armies, then inspiration must be sought in politics. For as the semi-official statement of the Russian War Department (quoted above) also declared, Russian retreats produce unaccountable apprehension in the minds of "our Western Allies." If the Germans do not think that they can beat Russia, perhaps they can persuade England and France that Russia is beaten, and achieve peace in 1917 that way.

That they could defeat Russia utterly the Prussians have never believed. That is why the "Western" group in the Prussian army has always predominated, why it is likely to predominate in the future. Hindenburg's present policy is a stopgap policy, adopted because French resistance proved momentarily too strong. But if Germany escapes from her present situation with a whole hide, and with her Austrian, Balkan and Ottoman hegemony intact, she will try to make her traditional peace with the broken elements of Russian Reaction, and place those elements at the head of the Russian Government once more.

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